UNITED
NATIONS

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Secretariat

ST/AI/395
2 June 1994

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION

To: Members of the staff

From: The Director of Personnel

Subject: APPOINTMENTS OF LIMITED DURATION*

1. By ST/SGB/Staff Rules/3/Rev.5, the Secretary-General provisionally promulgated, effective 1 January 1994, a revised 300 series of the Staff Rules, in accordance with staff regulation 12.2. The purpose of the present instruction is to provide guidelines on the administration of the revised 300 series rules, which are applicable to staff members recruited specifically to meet special needs of the United Nations for service of a limited duration. This instruction takes effect immediately.

2. The rules provide for two types of non-career appointments:

(a) Short-term (ST) appointments, under rule 301.1 (a) (i), for a period not exceeding six consecutive months. The purposes for which such appointments may be made are for assistance in dealing with peak workloads or meeting unforeseen demands, to cover essential work which, as a result of vacancies or absences, cannot be performed by regular staff, and to provide services for conferences and other short-term purposes;

(b) Appointments for activities of limited duration (LD) under rule 301.1 (a) (ii), including peace-keeping, peacemaking and humanitarian missions, as well as mission replacement appointments at Headquarters and other duty stations, technical cooperation activities in the field, emergency assignments and special operational needs of the Organization. LD appointments are intended for assignments not expected to exceed three years, with a possible extension, exceptionally, for a fourth and final year. Under no circumstances will an extension beyond four years be granted.

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* Personnel Manual index No. 4185.

Short-term (ST) appointments

3. Short-term appointments under rule 301.1 (a) (i) will continue to be administered as before at all duty stations for the purposes described in paragraph 2 (a) above. This revision consolidates and clarifies the provisions on travel (rules 307.1 to 307.7) and makes provision, in rule 306.3 (a), for the optional participation of short-term staff in a United Nations medical insurance scheme as specified in ST/IC/86/44 of 15 September 1986, or subsequent revisions. The special conditions of employment for short-term language staff are regulated in the agreements between the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ) and the Association internationale des interprètes de conférence (AIIC) for short-term interpreters and with the Association internationale des traducteurs de conférence (AITC) for short-term translators, revisers, editors and précis-writers, as reflected respectively in annex IV and annex V of the CCAQ Handbook. Salary rates and pensionable remuneration for staff on ST appointments are set out in appendix A to the 300 series of the Staff Rules.

Limited duration (LD) appointments

Purpose and remuneration

4. LD appointments are intended for situations where the Organization has to recruit personnel, at short notice, for tasks which are clearly finite in nature. As non-career appointments, they do not carry the range of entitlements and allowances geared to career service, and the remuneration is payable on a monthly basis as a lump sum, in an amount established at the outset of the assignment, consisting of a net base salary at the single rate after application of staff assessment which is pensionable, and a non-pensionable allowance. The rates for staff in the Professional and Field Service category are set out in appendix C to the rules. The rates for locally recruited General Service staff are promulgated separately for specific locations. These lump-sum payments constitute the total remuneration payable by the United Nations, to which may be added subsistence allowance (MSA or DSA) where applicable, or post adjustment at Headquarters duty stations. Staff on LD appointments are not eligible for separate benefits and allowances related to family situation, mobility, linguistic abilities or other factors.

Medical clearance

5. All candidates for appointment must meet United Nations standards of current and potential physical and mental fitness for employment. In order to expedite recruitment procedures, candidates may be given an interim appointment for three months on the basis of a certificate of good health from a duly qualified medical practitioner. Within three months of initial appointment, staff members must undergo a full medical examination by a physician or at a facility designated by the Medical Director, on the basis of which the Medical Director will determine whether they meet United Nations health standards. This clearance will normally be valid for a period of up to three years, unless the Medical Director determines that a more frequent examination cycle is required.

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Travel-related payments

6. For non-locally recruited LD staff, the Organization will normally make initial travel arrangements. For other travel related to appointment and separation, LD staff will receive a lump-sum travel allowance, equivalent to 75 per cent of the cost of the full economy-class fare by the least costly scheduled air carrier between the place of recruitment and the duty station, and return where applicable, intended to meet the cost of transportation, terminal expenses, excess baggage, passport, visa and other miscellaneous expenses. For each completed 12 months of service in special missions or duty stations designated as having very difficult conditions of life and work, and subject to an expectation of at least six additional months of service, a further lump sum will be paid based on 75 per cent of the cost of a round trip to the place of recruitment. For staff serving in non-hardship duty stations, a similar lump-sum payment will be made once only and following 24 months of service, subject to an expectancy of at least six additional months of service.

7. The lump-sum travel allowance represents the total compensation the United Nations will pay with respect to travel and transportation for staff recruited under an LD appointment, and the Organization will not be responsible for reimbursing expenses incurred by the staff member which may exceed the lump sums provided. The staff member is not expected to provide receipts or demonstrate actual expenditure of the amounts provided.

Leave

8. The rules permit flexibility in the grant of annual leave, depending on the special conditions of the particular mission or assignment. Annual leave with full pay will accrue at a minimum rate of one and one half days for each full month of continuous service, i.e., 18 working days per year. Under special circumstances, when authorized by the Secretary-General, a higher rate of accrual, but not more than two and a half days per month, may be granted if the appointment is for six months or more or upon completion of six months of continuous service. Annual leave provisions must be specified under Special Conditions in the letter of appointment. If not so specified the rate of one and one half days' accrual per month will apply.

9. Annual leave may be taken only when authorized, and all arrangements as to leave shall be subject to the exigencies of service. Absence from work without authorization will result in non-payment of salary for the period of the absence, unless it was caused by circumstances beyond the staff member's control.

10. A staff member who has served a minimum of six months may, in exceptional circumstances, be granted advance annual leave up to a maximum of 10 working days, provided his or her service is expected to continue for a period beyond that necessary to accrue the leave so advanced. If, upon separation, the annual leave credit actually earned and accrued was less than the advance, the staff member shall be required to make restitution by means of a cash refund. The restitution requirement may be waived if the Secretary-General is satisfied that there are compelling reasons for doing so.

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11. Subject to the exigencies of service, leave must be taken within the period of the contract, except that if a contract is extended, a maximum of one half of the total entitlement may be carried over into the next contractual period. A maximum of 15 days' accrued leave that is unused at the end of service may be commuted into cash.

12. In the light of the purpose of LD appointments no provision is made for maternity leave. Staff members who have served continuously for a minimum period of one year may, however, be granted a reasonable amount of special leave under rule 305.2, but not more than 16 weeks, with or without full pay but exclusive of subsistence allowances where applicable, upon production of a certificate from a qualified medical practitioner or midwife indicating the anticipated date of birth.

Sick leave

13. Credits towards sick leave, whether certified or uncertified, accrue at the rate of two working days for each month of continuous service. Upon appointment, staff members will be credited with the full amount of sick leave that will accrue during the whole period of the appointment. Should separation occur before the expiration date of the appointment, sick leave credits will be recalculated on the basis of the actual period of service. If an LD appointment is extended, or if a new LD appointment is given within one month after the expiration of the previous one, unused sick leave credits may be carried forward into the new contractual period. On separation from service, unused sick leave credits up to a maximum of 10 days may be converted into cash. All sick leave must be approved on behalf of the Secretary-General, and any absence of more than two consecutive working days must be supported by a medical certificate from a duly qualified medical practitioner. The provisions on sick leave and certification are set out in staff rule 306.2.

Social security

14. Staff members who meet the requirements of article 21 of the Regulations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (i.e., upon confirmation of an appointment for six months or longer, or upon completing six months of service without an interruption of more than 30 days) and who have met the standard United Nations medical requirements, will be enrolled as participants in the Fund, unless a specific exclusion is included in the letter of appointment. The rates of pensionable remuneration for Professional and Field Service categories are set out in appendix C to the rules. For General Service staff the pensionable remuneration is equivalent to gross salary.

15. Medical insurance, valid for the country of assignment, is a prerequisite for employment under an LD appointment. Candidates are required to produce evidence that they have coverage generally equivalent to United Nations coverage and including provision for medical evacuation in order to be exempted from participation in one of the United Nations medical schemes, which exemption will be included in the letter of appointment. Staff members who are exempted from United Nations coverage will be required to maintain their own coverage for the duration of the assignment, or, if it lapses, to join a United Nations scheme. United Nations schemes for holders of LD appointments cover the staff member only. Non-locally recruited staff will be eligible for participation in the

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Van Breda insurance scheme for staff members at offices away from Headquarters, particulars of which are set out in ST/IC/1993/65 of 29 November 1993, or subsequent revisions. Locally recruited staff will be eligible for coverage under the Medical Insurance Plan (MIP), as set out in ST/AI/343 of 31 July 1987. Staff at Headquarters duty stations will be eligible for one of the plans offered by that duty station, as set out in the relevant administrative circulars.

16. Staff members on LD appointments will be covered by United Nations war risk insurance where applicable, but are responsible for making their own arrangements for life insurance. Staff members will be entitled to compensation for service-incurred injury, illness or death. In each case the Secretary-General may decide whether to apply the provisions of appendix D to the Staff Rules, or to offer comparable compensation according to a schedule to be issued separately.

17. Staff members will be entitled to compensation, within the limits and under the conditions established by the Secretary-General, in the event of loss or damage to their personal effects determined to be directly attributable to the performance of official duties on behalf of the United Nations.

Status, obligations and privileges

18. Individuals holding LD appointments have the status of staff members of the United Nations and will be entitled to the privileges and immunities accorded to that status. If required to travel, they may be issued a United Nations laissez-passer. As international civil servants, they are held to the standards of conduct in the international civil service (COORD/CIVIL SERVICE/5) as well as the obligations set out in article I of the Staff Regulations, including the obligation to discharge their functions and to regulate their conduct with the interests of the United Nations only in view, the obligation to observe strict neutrality and the obligation not to seek or receive instructions from any source external to the United Nations.

Miscellaneous

19. Formal post classification is not a requirement for LD appointments in the field. The placement of the staff member on the salary scale and on the recruitment allowance grid will be determined at the time of recruitment, taking into consideration such factors as the qualifications and experience of the candidate and the special requirements of the post.

20. Contracts will normally be issued for up to one year at a time (including the three-month interim appointment pending medical clearance referred to in paragraph 5 above). The salary established will not be adjusted in the course of the contract. There will be no annual within-grade increments. Adjustments to the level of remuneration in succeeding contracts are discretionary and based on an assessment of all the relevant factors.

21. LD appointments are intended primarily for missions, emergency assignments and other special operational needs of the Organization and may also be used for mission replacement appointments at Headquarters and other duty stations.

22. A staff member recruited under an LD appointment may apply, as an external candidate, for a 100 series appointment, subject to existing recruitment procedures. LD appointments are not intended, and may not be used, to bypass normal recruitment procedures.

23. The total time in service under LD appointments may not exceed four years in any cont'nuous five-year period. The maximum of four years will be strictly observed. After completion of four years, the minimum break in service before an individual is again eligible for an LD appointment is one year.

Termination

24. An LD appointment may be terminated if, in the opinion of the Secretary-General, such action would be in the interest of the United Nations. Locally recruited staff members will be given not less than one week's written notice of termination. Non-locally recruited staff members will be given not less than two weeks' written notice. The Secretary-General may authorize pay in lieu of these notice periods. No termination indemnity is payable to staff on LD appointments unless such payment is specified in the letter of appointment.